



# S.A. police union tells city negotiators it wants total control of its officers' health care

by Joe Conger / KENS 5

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SAN ANTONIO -- The local police union has proposed a health care "trust" worth millions of dollars-- to fund some 2,100 police officers and their families' doctors visits, prescription drugs, surgeries and medical care.

It's the latest pitch by the union in collective bargaining negotiations with the City of San Antonio.

"Our estimated projections, we'd save the taxpayers over \$1 billion. If they're not willing to take that deal, I don't know what else, better offer that we can give them," said San Antonio Police Officers Association President, Mike Helle.

City officials said uniformed officers spend nearly twice what civilian employees do in health care, and expenses are climbing at a rate no one can afford. Yet police officers only contribute about 9 percent to their health costs.

Officials said the rest of city employees pay 30 percent.

"Currently, the uniform officers are costing the city about \$12,000 a year for health care. The civilian version of the city employees is costing about \$7,000 a year," said Jeff Londa, the City of San Antonio's Co-chief Negotiator.

The city manager's negotiators say without making some change to the system, the public safety department's budget will swallow the city's general fund within a generation.

The alternative put forth by the union claims it can save the city hundreds of millions of dollars in that same time frame, by taking over officers' health care altogether.

It uses the trust to manage health expenses without having to put officers on a city health plan their attorneys call "shared misery."

City negotiators said they will review the proposal, but cautioned it may not be a cure for what ails.